

CATALOGUE NO. 6321.0

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 A.M. 6 SEPTEMBER 1989

## INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, MAY 1989

### PHONE INQUIRIES

- *about these statistics and the availability of related unpublished statistics*—contact Fiona Blackshaw on Canberra (062) 52 6561 or any ABS State office.
- *about other statistics and ABS services*—contact Information Services on Canberra (062) 52 6007, 52 6627, 52 5402 or any ABS State office.

### MAIL INQUIRIES

- *write to Information Services*, ABS, PO Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any ABS State office.

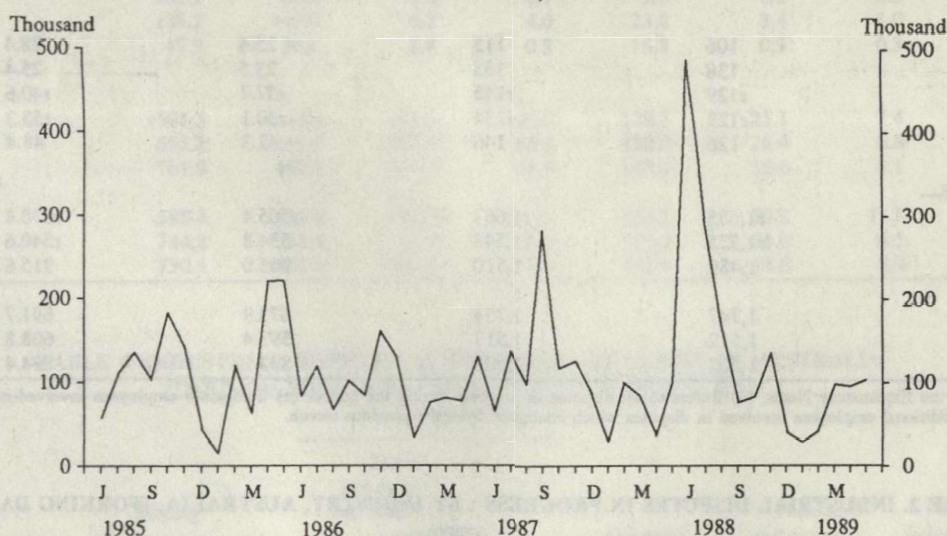
### ELECTRONIC

#### SERVICES

- on VIATEL — key \*656#.
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### MAIN FEATURES

#### WORKING DAYS LOST, AUSTRALIA



#### In May 1989—

- 146 disputes were reported in progress involving 48,400 employees and the loss of 103,700 working days. This compares with 95,700 working days lost for April 1989 and is the highest monthly figure since November 1988 (136,100).
- The Coal mining and the Metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industries accounted for 23.4% and 26.7% respectively of working days lost, with the Metal products, machinery and equipment industry recording the highest number of working days lost (27,700) since July 1988 (66,700).
- 36,100 working days were lost in Victoria, the highest level since July 1988 (187,800) while South Australia recorded the lowest number of working days lost (300) since February 1987 (300).

#### In the 12 months ended May 1989—

- 1,510 disputes were reported in progress, involving 915,600 employees and the loss of 1,658,800 working days.
- 267 working days were lost per thousand employees, compared with 212 and 198 for the twelve month periods ending May 1988 and 1987 respectively.
- Western Australia recorded 302 working days lost per thousand employees, the highest level for that State since the twelve month period ending March 1987 (304), while Queensland recorded the lowest level for that State (262) since May 1988 (173).
- 1,494 disputes were reported as ending during the period, involving 919,300 employees and the loss of 1,808,400 working days.
- Managerial policy was the cause of 601 disputes accounting for 53.7% (or 970,900) of working days lost.
- 971 disputes were of 1 day's duration or less accounting for 81.6% (749,900) of employees involved and 41.5% (751,000) of working days lost.
- 216 disputes, accounting for 44.6% (806,100) of all working days lost, were resolved by Federal and joint Federal-State legislation. 859 disputes (57.5% of all disputes) were settled by resumption without negotiation.

### NOTES

The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector) and trade unions concerning individual disputes, and from reports of government authorities.

The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

Explanatory Notes and a Glossary are published on pages 5 to 7 of this publication.

**W. McLENNAN**  
Acting Australian Statistician



TABLE 1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : AUSTRALIA

Period	Number of disputes(a)		Employees involved ('000)		Working days lost ('000)
	Commenced in period	Total(b)	Newly involved(c)	Total(b)	
1988—					
March	168	187	34.7	41.9	84.8
April	100	108	19.8	21.2	36.6
May	147	159	57.4	68.5	101.0
June	165	186	364.0	374.5	488.3
July	91	107	117.5	192.8	297.8
August	142	151	107.1	116.2	166.2
September	109	121	33.7	49.7	76.3
October	139	151	36.6	41.1	83.3
November	150	167	51.8	59.0	136.1
December	71	93	15.1	25.8	41.4
1989—					
January	106	115	25.4	28.4	29.1
February	138	153	23.5	25.4	42.8
March	r129	r145	r37.7	r40.6	r98.1
April	r123	r134	r50.1	r53.3	r95.7
May	126	146	42.3	48.4	103.7
Twelve months ended—					
May 1987	r1,655	r1,667	r565.4	r570.4	r1,145.1
1988	r1,525	r1,548	534.8	r540.6	r1,267.5
1989	1,489	1,510	905.0	915.6	1,658.8
December 1986	1,747	1,754	673.9	691.7	1,390.7
1987	1,512	1,517	593.4	608.8	1,311.9
1988	1,502	1,508	893.9	894.4	1,641.4

(a) See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (c) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

TABLE 2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST ('000)

Period	Manufacturing								All industries
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Transport and storage; Communication	Other industries (a)		
	Coal	Other							
1988—									
March	34.0	10.3	3.8	8.8	14.9	4.4	8.6		84.8
April	3.5	3.2	3.6	0.7	6.4	2.9	16.3		36.6
May	27.9	3.9	19.2	5.0	29.4	3.0	12.6		101.0
June	123.5	5.6	168.1	15.6	64.6	17.4	93.4		488.3
July	77.6	3.8	66.7	33.9	30.5	20.0	65.3		297.8
August	18.9	8.3	9.3	13.5	7.2	1.8	107.2		166.2
September	25.3	6.4	15.8	5.8	8.8	7.0	7.2		76.3
October	25.1	7.6	5.1	3.2	23.9	5.4	13.0		83.3
November	57.5	33.1	7.3	15.1	1.7	7.4	14.0		136.1
December	20.7	2.8	0.8	6.8	5.7	1.0	3.6		41.4
1989—									
January	8.7	2.2	2.4	3.6	2.2	5.7	4.3		29.1
February	8.9	1.5	14.4	8.0	2.4	3.0	4.7		42.8
March	r12.7	4.4	13.1	44.2	6.5	14.4	2.9		r98.1
April	r7.7	r2.0	r19.0	1.9	7.3	1.0	56.9		r95.7
May	24.3	2.8	27.7	11.3	13.8	6.7	17.1		103.7
Twelve months ended—									
May 1987	r172.1	148.6	176.9	228.6	r108.5	48.5	r261.9		r1,145.1
1988	330.1	60.1	139.0	150.5	199.6	85.6	r302.5		r1,267.5
1989	410.7	80.6	349.8	162.9	174.8	90.7	389.5		1,658.8
December 1986	362.0	179.4	187.4	205.3	117.7	57.6	281.4		1,390.7
1987	291.8	55.7	199.6	195.5	194.5	92.5	282.3		1,311.9
1988	471.3	97.4	309.5	117.4	207.9	75.0	362.9		1,641.4

(a) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.



TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST ('000)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
1988—									
March	26.5	13.2	21.4	0.7	17.2	3.4	1.4	1.0	84.8
April	10.7	13.1	3.3	1.3	5.3	1.5	0.2	1.3	36.6
May	39.3	5.8	45.8	2.6	5.1	0.9	0.9	0.6	101.0
June	269.0	64.7	94.2	23.4	24.8	3.5	1.3	7.4	488.3
July	48.6	181.8	49.8	4.7	9.7	2.9	—	0.2	297.8
August	120.5	21.2	6.8	4.1	7.3	3.5	1.7	1.2	166.2
September	30.2	22.7	12.8	0.6	9.1	0.1	—	0.8	76.3
October	31.7	7.4	11.3	1.1	30.2	0.8	0.5	0.3	83.3
November	59.9	10.1	30.3	1.0	33.2	0.7	0.2	0.8	136.1
December	21.4	11.6	2.8	1.6	2.9	—	1.1	—	41.4
1989—									
January	13.7	2.0	8.1	0.9	2.0	1.1	0.9	0.5	29.1
February	20.3	5.8	11.8	2.2	2.0	0.1	0.6	—	42.8
March	r61.1	20.4	6.6	6.1	2.8	0.2	0.6	0.4	r98.1
April	r38.2	r19.0	6.2	4.0	23.8	3.4	1.0	0.2	r95.7
May	47.3	36.1	3.8	0.3	15.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	103.7
Twelve months ended—									
May 1987	r501.5	r344.0	r95.5	r30.0	129.5	25.1	7.4	12.1	r1,145.1
1988	655.0	r249.9	147.5	45.1	122.0	28.4	6.8	12.8	r1,267.5
1989	761.9	402.7	244.5	49.9	163.0	16.6	8.1	12.0	1,658.8
December 1986	598.8	381.8	173.3	46.3	143.1	29.2	11.8	6.5	1,390.7
1987	744.8	281.4	73.7	44.6	115.3	28.0	6.5	17.5	1,311.9
1988	730.1	362.6	299.5	47.0	160.6	18.6	8.9	14.1	1,641.4

TABLE 4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES (a)								
Period	Manufacturing				Construc- tion	Transport and storage; Communication	Other industries (b)	All industries
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other				
	Coal	Other						
Twelve months ended—								
1985—								
December	6,892	1,928	256	312	666	430	71	228
1986—								
December	10,741	3,328	445	328	458	135	72	242
1987—								
December	8,920	1,072	479	305	743	217	70	223
1987—								
May	r5,108	r2,886	424	363	r423	113	r66	r198
1988—								
March	10,791	1,094	440	280	716	215	71	226
April	10,504	1,078	384	265	705	208	73	218
May	10,498	1,109	336	233	735	202	73	212
June	14,292	1,121	715	234	910	236	93	282
July	15,761	1,001	819	264	858	278	107	308
August	15,912	1,040	807	252	835	274	126	318
September	13,626	1,107	790	251	721	280	101	283
October	13,977	1,163	771	235	732	230	98	276
November	15,198	1,742	764	213	712	237	88	277
December	15,548	1,777	750	183	725	177	85	269
1989—								
January	15,575	1,805	751	186	702	187	84	267
February	14,330	1,629	763	187	684	186	82	257
March	r13,636	1,521	784	242	653	209	80	259
April	r13,793	r1,497	r817	243	653	204	89	267
May	13,674	1,478	835	253	599	212	90	267

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.



TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA,  
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
<i>Twelve months ended—</i>									
1985—									
December	209	236	411	48	187	138	213	159	228
1986—									
December	304	240	207	95	272	190	200	55	242
1987—									
December	366	172	87	91	213	177	111	143	223
1987—									
May	r252	r215	114	r62	241	r160	123	100	r198
1988—									
March	360	163	129	97	219	194	138	104	226
April	338	164	128	96	221	190	118	100	218
May	313	151	173	90	226	180	123	103	212
June	431	179	268	126	257	194	137	145	282
July	413	272	315	116	270	163	134	132	308
August	459	254	316	114	256	173	163	139	318
September	383	243	318	105	204	160	143	137	283
October	368	224	324	98	247	156	144	118	276
November	354	223	338	95	296	152	143	118	277
December	341	214	337	93	299	118	158	112	269
1989—									
January	341	213	328	94	295	122	164	116	267
February	322	210	329	88	277	117	153	112	257
March	337	214	310	98	250	97	137	108	259
April	349	216	309	104	283	108	149	99	267
May	353	233	262	99	302	104	139	97	267

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ENDING IN THE 12 MONTHS TO MAY 1989 : AUSTRALIA,  
CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT

CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
	Number of disputes	Employees involved (directly and indirectly) ( '000)	Working days lost ( '000)
CAUSE OF DISPUTE			
Wages	254	414.7	541.1
Hours of work	26	19.5	31.5
Leave, pensions, compensation	64	19.4	50.4
Managerial policy	601	344.7	970.9
Physical working conditions	297	53.5	131.5
Trade unionism	219	34.6	47.8
Other(a)	33	32.9	35.2
Total	1,494	919.3	1,808.4
DURATION OF DISPUTE			
Up to and including 1 day	971	749.9	751.0
Over 1 to 2 days	193	44.3	97.0
Over 2 and less than 5 days	150	37.6	148.6
5 and less than 10 days	111	68.8	537.6
10 and less than 20 days	53	16.6	213.7
20 days and over	16	2.1	60.6
Total	1,494	919.3	1,808.4
METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
Negotiation	275	115.4	222.5
State legislation	127	30.6	133.2
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	216	244.2	806.1
Resumption without negotiation	859	524.6	609.2
Other methods	17	4.4	37.4
Total	1,494	919.3	1,808.4

(a) Includes disputes not elsewhere categorised.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Introduction**

1. The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day.

2. The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (as defined in paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

3. The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

**Change in methodology**

4. The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in January 1987 to include estimates of employees from the Survey of Employment and Earnings. They are combined with estimates of the number of employees in agriculture and in private households, obtained from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each month back to June 1984 and are available on request. In issues of this publication prior to January 1987, the estimates of numbers of employees were based entirely on Labour Force Survey data. The effect of the change is minimal at the 'all industries' level but is quite significant, in some cases, for individual industry groups.

5. The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in December 1987 (see paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Before that date, where the causes of several disputes were the same (e.g. National Wage Case disputes) the disputes were counted as one dispute in each State or Territory in which they occurred, irrespective of whether they were directed or organised by one person or organisation, or whether the dispute occurred in more than one industry. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of disputes with the International Labour Organisation guidelines. In accordance with this change in definition, estimates of the number of disputes shown in this bulletin for past periods have been revised. In issues of this publication prior to September 1988, the number of disputes were counted on the old basis. Unpublished estimates of the number of disputes have been revised on the new basis from January 1985 and are available on request. The number of employees involved and working days lost remain unchanged.

**Reliability of estimates**

6. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to employers; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

**Other ABS publications**

7. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Industrial Disputes, Australia*, (6322.0)—issued annually

*Labour Statistics, Australia*, (6101.0) —issued annually

*The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0) — issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)—issued monthly

*Trade Union Statistics, Australia*, (6323.0)—issued annually

*Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1988* (6325.0)

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0) —issued quarterly

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0) — issued monthly

**Unpublished statistics**

8. A range of unpublished data is also available on request including dispute details at more detailed industry levels, cross-classified by States/Territories, and finer cause of dispute and method of settlement categories than those published. Considerable time series exist for most variables. Inquiries should be directed to the officer whose name appears in the Phone Inquiries section of the inquiries box at the front of the publication regarding the data availability and associated charges.

9. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

**Symbols and other usages**

- r estimates revised since last issue
- nil or rounded to zero

10. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

**Electronic services**

VIATEL. Key \*656# for selected current economic, social and demographic statistics.

AUSSTATS. Thousands of up-to-date time series are available on this ABS on-line service through CSIRONET.

For further information phone the AUSSTATS Help Desk on (062) 52 6017.

TELESTATS. This service provides foreign trade statistics tailored to users' requirements.

Further information is available on (062) 52 5404.

Text and tables for selected Main Economic Indicator publications. Further information is available on (062) 52 5405.

**Floppy disk service**

Selected ABS statistics are available on floppy disk. Further information is available on (062) 52 6684.



## GLOSSARY

**Cause of dispute**

1. The statistics of causes of industrial disputes relate to the main cause of the stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes between employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

**Wages.** Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant cause.

**Hours of work.** Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work e.g. decrease (increase) in hours; distribution of hours.

**Leave, pensions, compensation.** Claims involving general principles relating to holiday and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

**Managerial policy.** Disputes concerning the managerial policy of employers e.g. computation of wages, hours, leave, etc. in individual cases; docking pay, docking leave credits, fines; disciplinary matters including dismissals, suspension; alleged victimisation of union members or officials; principles of promotion and filling positions, transfers, roster complaints, retrenchment policy; employment of particular persons and personal disagreements; production limitations or quotas.

**Physical working conditions.** Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the conditions of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment; arduous physical tasks.

**Trade unionism.** Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

**Other.** Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship e.g. political matters; fining and gaoling of persons; lack of work; lack of adequate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

**Disputes**

2. For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.

3. A dispute affecting several establishments has been counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation in each State or Territory in which it occurs; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment and in each industry in which it occurred. Prior to December 1987 disputes were counted differently (refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for other details).

4. When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete calendar months, the dispute is deemed continuing. When the return to work is for two or more calendar months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.

**Duration of dispute**

5. The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the total number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).

**Employees**

6. *Employees* refer to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

7. *Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

8. *Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded. See paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes.

9. *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved included in the statistics relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the *total* number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees *newly* involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as employees *newly* involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

**Method of settlement**

10. Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the *method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work* and not necessarily to the



method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

*Negotiation.* Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

*State legislation.* Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

*Federal and joint Federal-State legislation.* Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance, of, or reference to, the industrial tribunals created by or constituted under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitration Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

*Resumption without negotiation.* This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

*Other methods.* Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal of employees.

### **Working days lost**

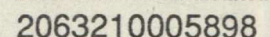
11. *Working days lost* refer to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

### **Working days lost per thousand employees**

12. *Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the break in series.



10. Statement of the method of selection of the material for the study and the results of the study.



ISSN 1031-0347